



# Appendix K. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pollinator Protection Plan

This plan establishes guidance to promote the health of pollinator species on lands and waters administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps Environmental Stewardship mission states: “The Army Corps of Engineers is the steward of the lands and waters at Corps water resources projects. Its Natural Resources Management Mission is to manage and conserve those natural resources, consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations. In all aspects of natural and cultural resources management, the Corps promotes awareness of environmental values and adheres to sound environmental stewardship, protection, compliance, and restoration practices. The Corps manages for long-term public access to, and use of, the natural resources in cooperation with other Federal, state, tribal and local agencies as well as the private sector. The Corps integrates the management of diverse natural resource components such as fish, wildlife, forests, wetlands, grasslands, soil, air, and water with the provision of public recreation opportunities. The Corps conserves natural resources and provides public recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of American life.”

Although the primary focus of this plan is on Corps fee-titled lands, this plan shall be applied, as appropriate, to all Corps commands having responsibility for Civil Works (CW) functions. In accordance with Title 36, CFR, Chapter III, part 327.0 this guidance shall be applicable to water resources development projects, completed or under construction, administered by the Chief of Engineers, and to those portions of jointly administered water resources development projects which are under the administrative jurisdiction of the Chief of Engineers. Additional activities and pollinator friendly management actions will be shared among other Corps programs and where appropriate added to the Corps overall plan.

Presidential Memorandum—“Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators,” dated June 20, 2014, directs agencies to develop plans to enhance pollinator habitat. *As per Section 3. Increasing and Improving Pollinator Habitat, subsection k, the Army Corps of Engineers shall incorporate conservation practices for pollinator habitat improvement on the 12 million acres of lands and waters at resource development projects across the country, as appropriate.* While accomplishing activities on Corps lands per Section 3 (k), the Corps also presents valuable contributions to Section 2 (b) and Section 2 (c) for public education and partnerships.

## **USACE Commitments to Enhance Habitat on USACE Fee Owned Projects**

The Corps will work with others to promote education, awareness, and management practices that provide for improved bee and pollinator populations and habitat through the following USACE PM Implementation Actions:

- Identify existing policy and guidance, and modify for pollinator health including access for commercial hives.
- Incorporate pollinator work within budget guidance.

- Increase awareness and education.
- Implement conservation and best management practices for pollinator health.

### Issue Policy/Guidance on Pollinator Health and Management

Once the task force work is completed for “Pollinator Friendly Best Management Practices”, the Corps HQ Natural Resource Management (NRM) branch will issue a policy memo or similar guidance to Divisions, Districts, and Projects encouraging the manual to be used as part of normal operating principles during land management. The Corps will revise guidance of natural resource regulations when updated.

**Metrics:** The Corps will issue either a policy memo or guidance dependent upon the final release of the “Pollinator Friendly Best Management Practices for Federal Lands” (BMPs) publication from the Task Force, which is expected June 2015.

The Corps will revise guidance of natural resource regulations during updates of Engineering Regulation 1130-2-540 Stewardship Operations and Maintenance Guidance and Procedures that direct the Corps land management.

**Metrics:** The Corps will modify ER 1130-2-540 to include pollinator protection and management —TBD.

### Incorporate Pollinator Work within Budget Guidance

Provide guidance in USACE Budget Engineer Circular and Environmental Stewardship Budget Tools that allow pollinator habitat improvements and other projects that benefit bees and wild pollinators to be identified and considered during the budget process under the stewardship business line.

**Metrics:** Completed. Budget identifiers have been established in the ENS Business Line Budget Tool (ESBEST).

### Increase Awareness and Education

Section 2 (b) of the Presidential memorandum calls for plans to expand and coordinate public education programs, outlining steps individuals and businesses can take to help address the loss of pollinators. The Corps is one of the leading providers of outdoor recreation with over 370 million visitors per year. The Corps is uniquely qualified to engage with visitors as over 80 percent of Corps projects are within 50 miles of a metropolitan area.

The Corps will incorporate information on pollinator health in exhibits and displays for visitor education, as appropriate, and increase the pollinator habitat message into ranger contact materials when updates occur. The Corps will consider construction of pollinator gardens near visitor centers and other high pedestrian traffic areas to promote healthy pollinator habitat.

**Metrics:** The Corps will develop a timeline to implement awareness and education actions for both Corps' managers and the public.

### Implement Conservation and Best Management Practices for Pollinator Habitat

Many opportunities exist for the Corps to improve pollinator habitat on its 12 million acres across 470 projects. The Corps will use the Task Force BMPs publication to improve and protect pollinator habitat. More specifically, the Corps supports utilization of the following BMPs to improve pollinator habitat as established in the draft BMP for Federal lands: 1) thinning and understory shrub control, 2) removing invasive species to improve pollinator habitat, 3) promoting native plant communities along forest roads for pollinators, 4) seeding native forb species in restoration, rehabilitation, and re-vegetation efforts.

Furthermore, the Corps supports utilization of the following BMPs to protect pollinators: 1) integrated pest management, 2) prescribed burning, 3) mowing, 4) agricultural practices for wildlife management, 5) mulching for landscaping and gardens, 6) managing lawns for pollinators.

The Corps will seek opportunities for habitat improvements specific to monarch butterflies. In recent years the monarch butterfly has experienced a 90 percent decline in population, with the lowest recorded population occurring in 2013-2014. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has focused on the I-35 corridor from Texas to Minnesota as an area that provides important spring and summer habitat along the butterfly's migration path. Coordination with partners, such as Texas Parks and Wildlife, has begun as the Corps has over 1 million acres at 45 projects within 50 miles of I-35. Additionally, the Corps will look for opportunities to prioritize projects and habitat enhancement actions that occur with recognized zones of importance.

The Corps will consider pollinator practices related to specific program areas to include the following: 1) *Land Use Planning* - Consideration of impacts to pollinators shall be incorporated into work related to out-grants, licenses, and other land management decisions. Additionally, the Corps shall review current policies related to beekeeper access to Corps lands and evaluate regional procedures to assist in providing improved access. 2) *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* - Technical material from subject matter experts will be distributed via web on proper management and protection of pollinators and their habitat to allow for improved decision making during the NEPA process. 3) *Wildfire Management* - Wildfire management plans shall be considerate of impacts related to pollinators and, when flexibility permits, adjusted to minimize impacts. 4) *Integrated Pest Management Plans* - The Corps will distribute information from the Task Force agencies to educate the Corps field staff on improved uses of pesticides

**Metrics:** The Corps, with assistance from the Task Force, will evaluate potential metrics to track both work and accomplishments that improve pollinator habitat, partnerships, and/or education. For FY 2017 budget development, the Corps has developed specific indicators to track work activities and accomplishments that target pollinator protections. At a minimum, the acreage of habitat improvement, invasive species treatment, plantings, site protection and other related activities will be identified, consolidated, and incorporated into the Corps annual program recommendations. Additional metrics focusing specifically on monarch improvements and pesticide management will be evaluated for future development.

Milestone: The Corps will begin Implementation of Conservation and Best Management Practices for Pollinator Habitat dependent upon the final release of BMP manual from Task Force and the issuance of Corps guidance.

**Partnerships**

The Corps recognizes the power of partnerships and volunteers to accomplish natural resource management activities. In both 2013 and 2014, the Corps received over \$50 million in value from partner contributions and in-kind services. The existing network of partners will provide the Corps an excellent starting point for this initiative.

Along with Task Force assistance, the Corps will contact national partners to identify opportunities for pollinator work on Federal lands. The Corps along with Task Force assistance will engage with existing partners such as the National Wild Turkey Federation, Quality Deer Management, and the American Chestnut Foundation to discuss assistance in both management and education of pollinator health. The Corps Stewardship Advisory Team will engage the Corps Partnership Advisory Committee to evaluate existing partnership tools, such as challenge partnerships and handshake programs to determine their use to improve pollinator health.